



# Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz NRCD Regular Meeting      December 11, 2024      Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

Board Supervisors & Clerk: Stephen Williams, Dan Bell, Bill Schock, Christin Peterson and Chris Postel (Clerk).

Agencies & Guests: Nick Schobinger (AZ Game & Fish), Ashley Wright & Rodolpho Martinez (UA Cooperative Extension). Briggs Todd (Cooperator).

Called to Order: 12:01 pm

Review/Approval of 9/25/24 Minutes: Bill Schock had made some minor edits which will be added to the final minutes. Bill Schock moved to approve the final minutes with changes. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

Treasurer's Report (See Attached Report): Dan presented the Treasurer's Report. The State Account balance is \$19,509.46. The Ed Center Account balance is \$18,792.02. The SCNRCD Local Account balance is \$151,531.91. Bill Schock made a motion to file and accept the Treasurer's Report. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

Clerk Invoice & Administration Update: The next meeting date will be February 26, 2024. The next newsletter will in January-February, 2025.

- Clerk's Invoice (Oct-Dec, 2024): The Clerk reviewed the invoice. Chris Peterson moved to pay the invoice, \$1,277.36. Dan Bell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

**NRCS (Alisha Phipps):** Tabled. She emailed the report and is attached for the Board's review.

**UofA Cooperative Extension (Ashley Wright):** With no access to funding, they are still on spending restrictions and had to cancel the planned Artificial Insemination clinic. They plan to hire a Livestock Specialist (March 2025) and conduct Beginning Rancher-Farmer workshops (Spring, 2025).

**UofA Cooperative Extension-Santa Cruz County (Rodolfo Martinez Morales):** They are working on their first newsletter. He has a new program, "Emerging Leaders of Santa Cruz", which started with 25 high school students from 9 schools. They meet once/month (Friday, all day) to learn about environment issues, soil, water, etc. They are also working on a variety of community projects: gathering food for the homeless, restoring a park, and developing a website of available jobs. Their next meeting dates are: Dec 13, Jan 16, Feb 14, Mar 27, Apr 13, and May 19. Dan Bell mentioned Santa Fe Ranch Days in May. Stephen Williams mentioned Project WET in May and NRCWAY in the summer. The Los Charros Foundation scholarships was also discussed.

**Az Game & Fish (Nick Schobinger):** They have completed funding for Fiscal 2025. A Regional Conservation Partnership Program for the Colorado River Conservation Area for 35,000 acres was recently funded for \$24.5 million. Its primary purposes are brush removal and water development for livestock and wildlife. The three focus areas are the Arizona Strip, Yavapai County and SE Arizona.

Proposals are due Sep 8, 2025 for their cooperative programs: Landowner Relations, Habitat Partnership Committee, and Heritage Fund. Quail season has just started. Agency personnel changes: Jerimiah Fountain is the new wildlife manager Units 34A&B and Brian Aragon is the new supervisor.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Signs:** Per Bill Schock, he contacted the sign business in Sahuarita but they don't do outdoor signs. Stephen Williams contacted Wicked Limitz (Sierra Vista). They did the Hereford NRCD signs. A 6x3 ft sign is \$415 and a 4x5 ft sign is \$453 (heavy metal). 2-3 signs would be needed plus pipe and concrete. Chris Peterson could donate some bags of concrete & Dan Bell can donate the pipe. Dan Bell moved to fund up to \$1,500 for 3 signs. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

**Board Vacancy:** Per Stephen Williams, a person expressed interest but he was registered to vote in Pima County. A new supervisor who is a farmer with an irrigation operation would be a good addition to the Board. A new supervisor cannot obtain an Oath of Office until the new Natural Resource Conservation Board is appointed and functioning

**Riparian Monitoring Training for Jim Koweek:** Per Chris Peterson, Jim Koweek only does upland monitoring. Dan Bell will get the US Forest Service contacts for doing riparian monitoring. FS monitors twice per year at established sites, during the dry season and after the rainy season. Per Stephen Williams, Larry Fisher (Cooperative Extension) and Friends of the Verde River will have a Zoom call on Watershed Health that will result in a video available for download.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Conservation Board Update (Deborrah Smith, AACD):** Per Deborrah, they have passed legislation that moved the Conservation District statutes from title 37 to title 41. The new NRCD Board will consist of 6 elected NRCD supervisors, 2 appointed supervisors from a Soil and Water Conservation District (Tribal), and 3 agency representatives from the following agencies: State Land, Dept of Ag, Dept of Forestry Fire Management, AZ Game & Fish. The new Board needs to be formed by Dec 31 and the Governor's office is interviewing the appointees. The following details are being worked on such as: office space, website, funding, elect a board chair & vice-chair, paying the Districts, filing agendas, minutes, & reports, etc. AACD will be the executive director (Deborrah) for the first year and she will be supported by Brooke Gladden and Amber Morin. Amber Morin will finish the Santa Cruz NRCD Conservation Action Plan. Local Work Group (LWG) training is scheduled for Feb 3, 2025 to identify resource needs. The funding will be the same as last year.

### **Supervisor & Clerk Reports**

- **Bill Schock:** He got a grant to remove mesquite, 150 trees so far. He is also using chemicals. Heather Speith has finished one polygon. The Cooperative Extension tested his water at his house and the results will be available in March, 2025. BLM is doing a 17-point assessment with 5 people (Soil, Plant, etc). The report will be completed by Sep, 2025 and is no-charge. The latest drought monitoring report considered Santa Cruz County abnormally dry. He has had only one rain in the last 2 months. He needs more funding for mesquite removal, has to walk during the removal, doing it by hand. He is defining the mesquite removal protocol for BLM. He attended the Sentinel Landscape meeting, over 60 people attended, no decisions were made.
- **Dan Bell:** The Center for Biological Diversity will file amended lawsuit. The Permittees have been able to fund the lawyer's work (Norm James). He is working with US Forest Service on an electronic fence project. He has collared 100 cattle, \$50/cow. Using GPS ear tags on the bulls.

- Christin Peterson: With assistance from Heather Speith (NRCS), all of the wells are done and being reviewed by the engineers. She added a solar pump and a 3,000-gallon storage tank.
- Stephen Williams: Jim Koweek completed the monitoring and needs to submit an invoice.

Adjourn: Chris Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill Schock seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 4-0. The Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Planned next meeting date: February 26, 2025

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: February 26, 2025

Approval of Minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_